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The Achaemenid painted pottery of Hasanlu IIIA

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This paper presents data on the painted pottery of Hasanlu II/IIIA from an analysis of field records. The excavation programme at Tepe Hasanlu was carried out between 1956 and 1977 for the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Archaeological Service of Iran. Period II/IIIA, the final pre-Islamic occupation of the site, dates to the Late Achaemenid-Early Hellenistic period[1]. The painted pottery includes Western Triangle Ware, Cream-slipped Bichrome Ware, Brown-line Ware, and Classic Triangle Ware.

Site and sequence

Hasanlu is one of several large Iron Age mounds in the Qadar River valley at the southern end of Lake Urmia in western Azerbaijan, Iran. It consists of a central Citadel Mound (25m above the plain and about 200m in diameter) surrounded by an Outer Town. It was occupied from about 5500 BC to about 280 BC and again in Islamic times.

Stratigraphy of period II/IIIA

The period II/IIIA deposits overlie Fortification Wall II built during the Urartian occupation of the eighth to seventh centuries BC (Kleiss 1994; Dyson 1964: fig 1, plan) and then abandoned. The abandonment lasted long enough for the garrison rooms to fill in, and for a well-established erosion surface to form. Eventually large slabs of mudbrick from the fortification wall fell inwards onto this surface at both the western and the southern edges of the mound (Dyson 1999: fig 10). The overlying period II/IIIA deposit, 1-2m deep, covers these ruins. It also occurs sporadically in the Outer Town. The deposits are badly pitted and contain fragmentary walls. At the highest point of the mound lie the remains of a large structure, the P-II building, consisting of semi-subterranean rooms around two sides of an open courtyard. This structure appears to have been cut down through the IIIA stratum and was, therefore, termed 'II'. Its foundations rest on the upper surface of a segment of the fallen IIIB fortification wall. On the apparent outside ground level of the P-II building lay a cut limestone column base of Hellenistic type[2]. This and several sherds[3] indicate that occupation continued into the early third century. It seems probable that the three fragments of Fortification Wall I found are associated with this P-II building. Perhaps this re-fortification of the site was linked to the empire of Seleucus I (312-280 BC) which controlled this area after about 300 BC.

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[1] No consistent terms for the periodisation of this time range have been generally implemented — a fact which frequently masks the contemporaneity of archaeological data. Most scholars agree on the Achaemenid period as c.550-330 BC. However, the time period following has been variously described as 'Post-Achaemenid' (Stronach 1974: 1978), 'Seleucid' (Schippmann 1987), or 'Hellenistic' (Oates 1968; Boucharlat 1991; Guillaume and Rougeulle 1987). The ceramics of this period in both east and west are marked by a relatively abrupt change with the introduction of new forms and imports derived from Greek sources. This development coincided with the empire of Seleucus I (c.312-280 BC). In eastern Iran, this political unity was disrupted by the rise of the (early) Parthians after c.250 B.C. In the west, Hellenistic control survived until ended by the conquest of the Parthian king Mithradates I (c.171-138 BC). Haerinck (1983: 4 fn 2) calls this period in the west 'Early Parthian' (c.250-150 BC). It is unclear whether Stronach at Pasargadae intends to include Tall-i Tahkt III (c.280-180 BC) in his 'Post-Achaemenid' (1978: 155).

Meanwhile, the term Iron IV has been introduced (Young 1975: 192) to cover survey materials which fall between the end of Godin II (c.550 BC, Brown 1990: 67) and the 'clinky' or 'cinnamon' ware of the Middle Parthian (150-0 BC, Haerinck 1983: 100-6). Levine (1987: 239) includes Achaemenid and Early Parthian as Iron IV. To avoid confusion with Hasanlu period numbers, in this text we have used Achaemenid and Hellenistic for the fourth and third centuries BC.

[2] The type is known from the temple area at Ai Khanum in Bactria, dated to the Hellenistic period (Guillaume, Rougeulle 1987: pl 23, no 1, pl XIX, nos 1-6).

[3] Typical of 300-275 BC at Ai Khanum (Gardin pers comm).

Hasanlu II/IIIA painted pottery[4]

The original term 'Triangle Ware' was applied to a handful of sherds found in the early stages of excavation at Hasanlu which were quite distinct from other pottery being found. The term 'ware' as used meant 'a recurring combination of distinctive attributes including colour, temper, forming and finishing techniques, characteristic vessel forms and types of decoration' (Henrickson 1994: 115). Since the term Triangle Ware was introduced[5], it has been extended by other authors to include a variety of quite different forms and fabrics having in common painted triangle motifs[6]. This usage, lacking a more precise definition, really applies to a 'style'[7] rather than to a 'ware'. Recently, the term 'Western Triangle Ware' has been introduced to distinguish this material from the 'Eastern Triangle Ware' found at Charsada and Shaikhan Dheri in Pakistan[8]. The distinction is useful and Western Triangle Ware is used here for all stylistically-related materials in western Iran, eastern Turkey and Georgia. For the original 'Triangle Ware', we shall reserve the name 'Classic Triangle Ware' (see also Dyson 1999).

Western Triangle Ware at Hasanlu

The painted pottery characteristic of Hasanlu II/IIIA includes both Western and Classic Triangle Ware. The latter may now be reassigned from period IIIB to period IIIA on the basis of our current study (Dyson 1999). Western Triangle Ware at Hasanlu includes deep or shallow carinated bowls with designs painted around the inside of flaring-rims (figs 1a-g[9], 5d-e); carinated bowls with squared, everted rims (fig 3e-f)[10], or rims with an inward-slanting face (fig 5f); uncarinated club-rimmed bowls (fig 2a-c); uncarinated bowls with everted rounded rims (fig 3a-c)[11] and uncarinated sinuous-sided bowls painted inside the rim (fig 2d-f)[12]. Deep bowls range from 12 to 15cm in diameter and are 0.4 to 0.6cm in thickness; shallow bowls are more variable, measuring from 13 to 20cm in diameter, and 0.5 to 0.9cm in thickness. The deep (see Hamilton 1966: figs 5d, 6c; Gagoshidze 1979: pl XII, 76) and shallow bowls (see Hamilton 1966: figs 1a, 4; Stern 1982: fig 239, sixth century BC tomb of Megabelein; Gagoshidze 1979: pl XII, 74, 247-249) reproduce the shape of metal vessels of the Achaemenid period. Club-rimmed and square-rimmed bowls are larger, 17 to 20cm in diameter, with a thickness of 0.4 to 0.8cm. Sinuous-sided bowls seem to have a standard 14cm diameter with 0.7 to 0.8cm thick side walls. The largest bowl, 26cm in diameter, is 0.6cm thick and has a rounded, everted rim (fig 3d).

Sherds painted in bichrome on a burnished cream slip come from thick-walled (0.9 to 1cm) jars with lozenge patterns (fig 5a-c), or from carinated bowls (diameter 20cm) painted with solid triangle-and-line patterns (fig 5f)[13]. Jar sherds, 0.7 to 1cm thick, sloppily painted with geometric patterns in thin brown lines, also occur (fig 4, see for example, Summers 1993: figs 7, 13, 14 Cimin Tepe II).

All of this pottery is wheel-made, hard, well-fired, and tempered with fine grit or sand. Cores are pinkish-buff and exteriors are often cream-slipped (with a firing range on individual sherds from yellowish-cream to orangish-pink). Paint colours range from plum-brown to dark brown, red-brown, or occasionally red. While some sherds are slightly or well burnished they normally lack the high polish characteristic of Classic Triangle Ware and are thicker (0.5cm or more as compared to 0.3cm).

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[4] Presentation of II/IIIA unpainted pottery, small objects, burials and architectural remains will be made elsewhere.

[5] Dyson 1958: 1, 'what we call "Triangle Ware", a fine buff pottery, very thin, with high polish, and painted with triangles around the rim'; 1965: 204, 'The finest ware ..., which to judge by its rarity may have been imported, has been called Triangle Ware (fig 9) owing to the preponderance of cross-hatched or solid hanging triangles painted on thin, fine, highly polished buff pottery'.

[6] For example, Haerinck 1983: 130; Summers 1993: 86-8, figs 6 and 7; Dittmann 1984. Forms of Triangle Ware are reported from Jameh Shuran in the central Zagros, but have not been illustrated (Levine 1987).

[7] Henrickson 1994, 115, 'a consistent and distinctive group of (decorative) techniques, ... characteristic of a specific time and place'.

[8] Dittmann 1984: 174, 189. The sequences at Charsada and Shaikhan Dheri show clearly how the Eastern variant of the style persisted through the first millennium BC, while pottery forms changed (Wheeler 1962: figs 20:99, 100, 101, 21:125-126, 22:128, 136-137, 141, 23:149, 24:113, 172 (c.300-200 BC), 27:206-207, 28:237 (c.200-100 BC), 32:283 (c.100 BC-AD) and Dani 1965-66: fig 21 (c.150-50 BC)). See Dittmann 1984 for a discussion of his proposed modifications to Wheeler's dating.

[9] Kroll 1976: type 11, Achaemenid.

[10] Kroll 1976: type 44, Achaemenid.

[11] Kroll 1976: types 25-27, Achaemenid.

[12] The absence of painted ware in Baba Jan I (Goff 1985) and in the Late Achaemenid at Pasargadae (Stronach 1978) is notable in contrast to the amount found in Azerbaijan and eastern Turkey by recent surveys and excavations. This may be a regional northern phenomenon reaching to the Black Sea coast.

[13] Bichrome ware is reported from a number of Azerbaijan sites (e.g. Swiny 1973: fig 8b:f-h; Kroll 1976: fig 8a, Qal'eh Khezerlu and others) and sites in the Van area (e.g. Von der Osten 1952: figs 3-6, Altın Tepe).

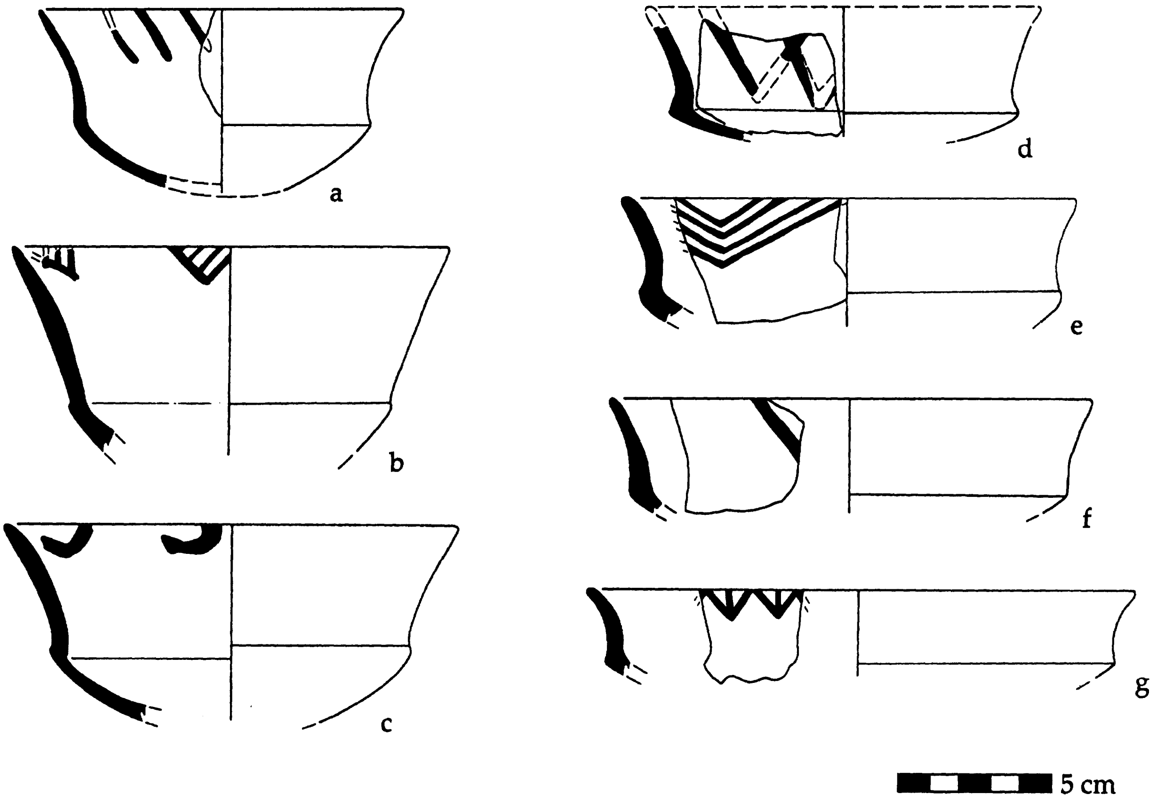

Fig 1. Hasanlu Period IIIA: flaring rim bowls (Western Triangle Ware)

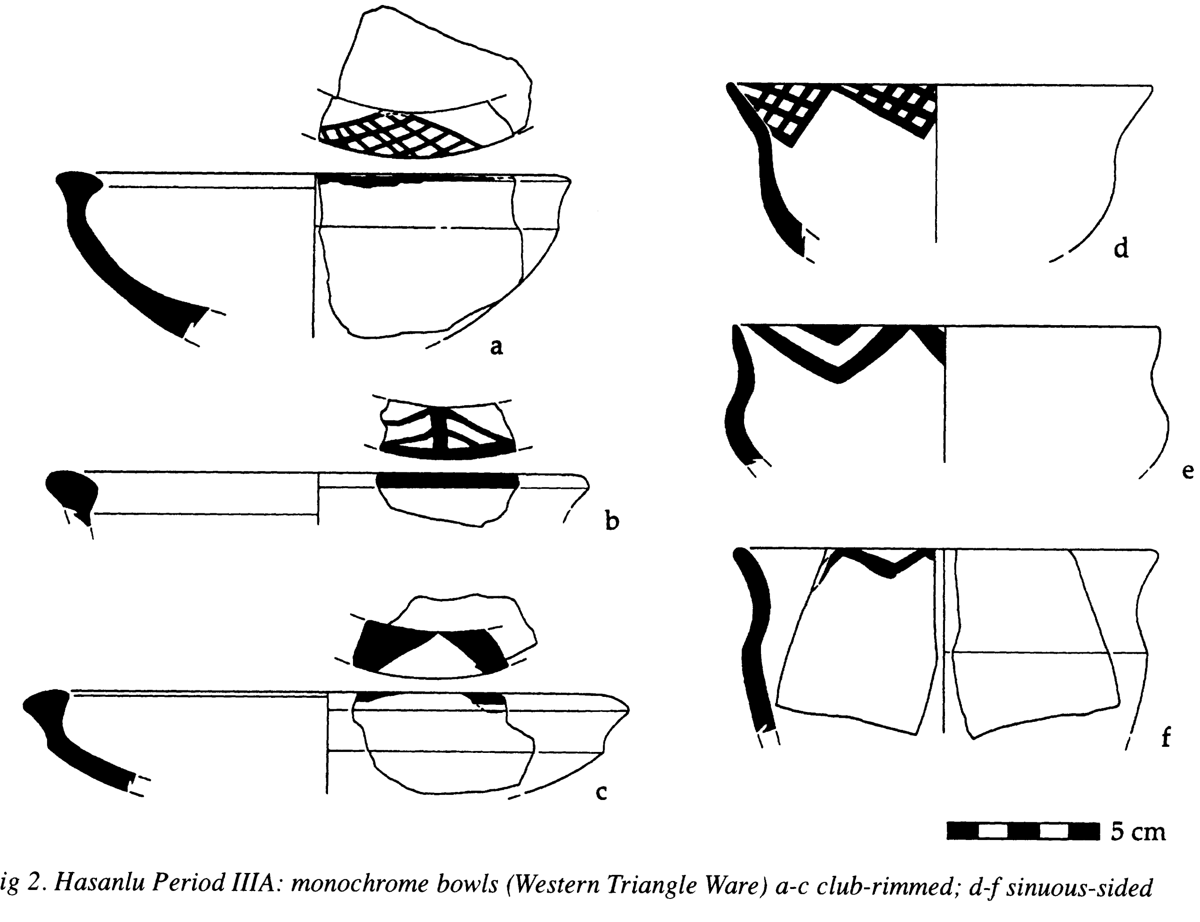

Fig 2. Hasanlu Period IIIA: monochrome bowls (Western Triangle Ware) a-c club-rimmed; d-f sinuous-sided

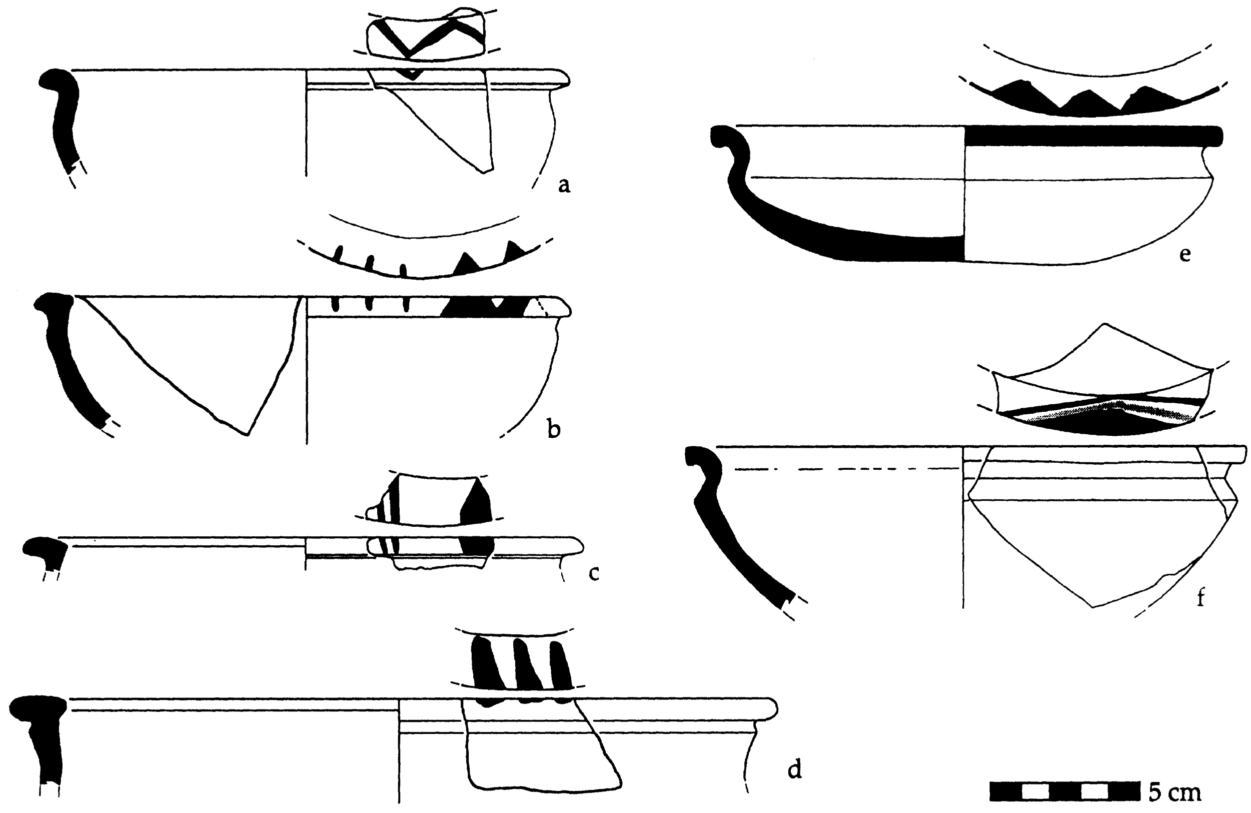

Fig 3. Hasanlu Period IIIA: bowls with everted rims (Western Triangle Ware)

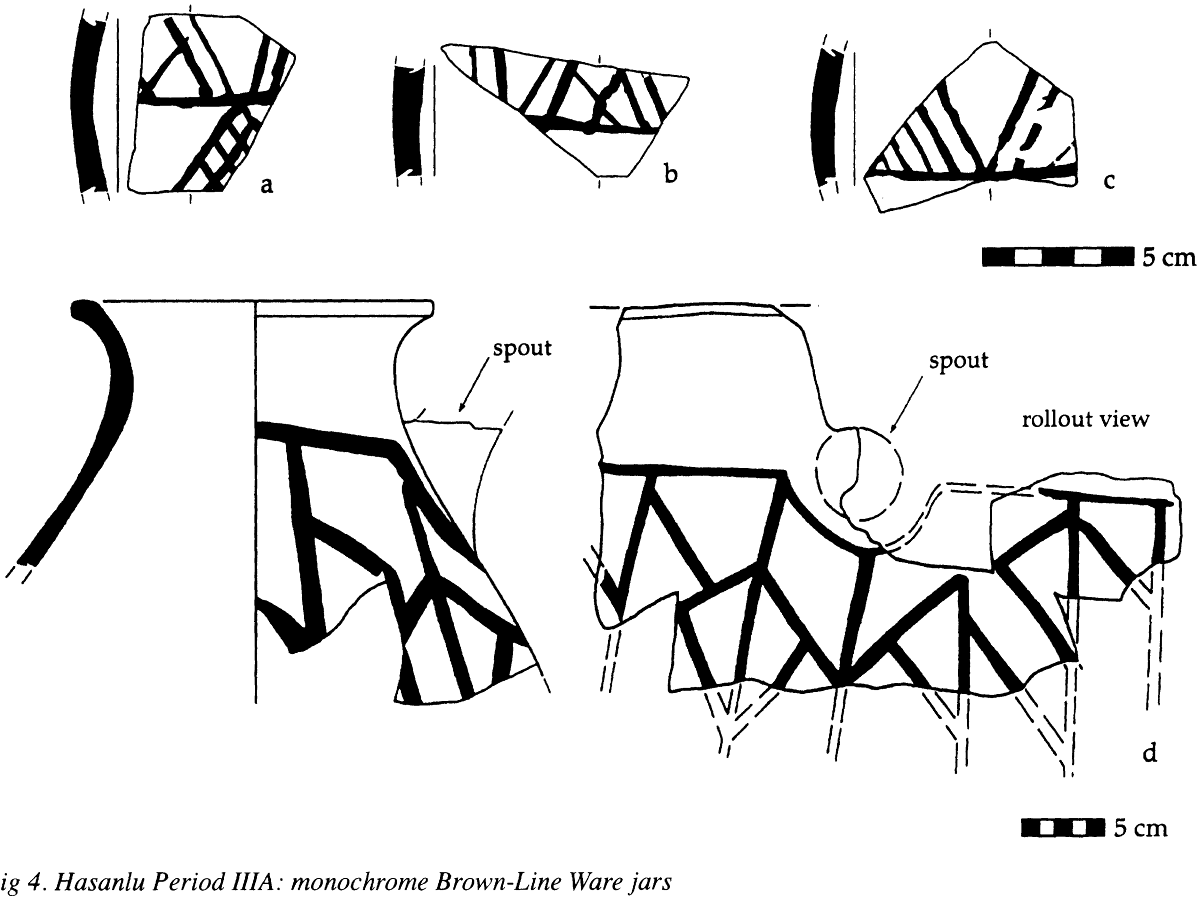

Fig 4. Hasanlu Period IIIA: monochrome Brown-Line Ware jars

The samples of Western Triangle Ware tested by neutron-activation analysis[14] have all proved, so far, to be locally made.

In contrast, uniquely of all samples tested, Classic Triangle Ware was apparently imported (Bedal 1995; Dyson 1999: figs 1, 2, 7). These imported vessels were primarily jars with thin, low flaring rims never more than 0.3cm in thickness (fig 6a-b, d-f), sometimes with an omphalos base (fig 6c). These jars have diameters ranging from 9 to 15cm. A jar with splayed body spout and a vertical handle is attributed to Ziwiye[15]. The only other jar type at Hasanlu had a bottle-neck rim (fig 6g).

As indicated earlier, the II/IIIA painted pottery assemblage appears after a long hiatus in the Hasanlu occupation. It appears fully developed from elsewhere, although generally made locally. It has no obvious connections with earlier pottery at Hasanlu, but has clear connections with other areas of Azerbaijan, eastern Turkey, Georgia, and eastern Iran. The pieces illustrated here characterise the more common shape groups (figs 7-8). There are, however, several additional unique bowl forms which require additional study before presentation

Dating

Period II/IIIA appears to have a *terminus ante quem* of about 275 BC provided by the Hellenistic column base (c.325-300 BC)[16], a twin-spouted rhyton (no later than c.280 BC at Pasargadae)[17], and the bowl rims of 300-275 BC type at Ai Khanum. A *terminus post quem* is suggested by three radiocarbon determinations from samples low in the IIIA stratum centring on 400 BC[18]. A date in the fourth to early third century BC is also suggested by a palmette-stamped ring-based bowl sherd in Attic Black-glazed Ware[19]. Henrickson notes that there are virtually no imports before the early fifth century BC at Gordion when they become widespread[20]. Locally made black-painted unguentaria were found near a Hellenistic kiln at Gordion (Edwards 1959: fig 21). The neck of a similar vessel was found at Hasanlu[21]. Since Hasanlu is en route from Gordion to Bactria, perfume may well have been exported to the east, while other imports may have made their way south from the Black Sea coast. At least one Western Triangle Ware bowl occurs at Gordion (Henrickson pers comm) and the ware occurs in Georgia associated with Greek coins of the fourth century BC (Kroll pers comm).

The end of the Hasanlu II/IIIA occupation around the end of the first quarter of the third century BC is suggested by the general absence of ring bases, incurved bowls, fish-plates, and flat, ledge-rim plates — all hallmarks of the later Hellenistic period (Hannestad 1983; Boucharlat 1991; Oates 1968; Stronach 1978; Wheeler 1962; Dani 1965-66). The flat ledge-rim plate occurs at Yanik Tepe in the Ardabil-style material attributed to Early Parthian, i.e. Hellenistic 250-150 BC (Burney 1962: pl LXV, 33; Haerinck 1978; 1983: 127-31, fig 20), which should follow Hasanlu II. This style should in turn be followed by the Middle Parthian painted ware from Meshkin Shahr (Ingraham, Summers 1979). To the east, the evolution of unpainted, shallow, carinated flaring-rim bowls is well documented in Seleucid (Hellenistic) Tureng Tepe (Deshayes 1979: fig 3), and the later evolution of the Triangle Ware style is well documented at Charsada and Shaikhan Dheri (Dittmann 1984; Wheeler 1962; Dani 1965-66).

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[14] Bedal 1995. This study was based on an analysis of 312 and 230 sherds drawn from Hasanlu periods VI through II/IIIA from Hasanlu and Dinkha respectively. The study was a joint project of our Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology and the Royal Ontario Museum. It defined a local 'Solduz chemical fingerprint' for the valley clay, which was used in all periods for local production.

[15] In the Tehran Archaeological Museum.

[16] Stern 1982: fig 58 top, illustrates the type from the Persian period of Lachish III.

[17] Hasanlu 1972: X 31 (1). See Stronach 1978: fig 114:6, 'not later than 280 BC', Pasargadae; Hansman and Stronach 1974: fig 1a-c, Parthian Shahr-i Qumis; Shishkina 1994: fig 3 lower right, Afrasiab-Samarkand II-III, third-second century; Vainberg 1994: fig 6 Kalali-Gir 2, Khwarazm, Late Achaemenid; Haerinck 1980: fourth century BC to Parthian .

[18] Dyson 1999: fig 11, P420: cal BC 411 (401) 390; P582: cal BC 402 (392) 263; P-2377: cal BC 508 (404) 392.

[19] Bennet and Blakely 1989: fig 126 no 183, dated 430-410 BC but in stratum IV, early Hellenistic. For two Shahr-i Qumis surface sherds of Attic Black-glazed Ware see Hansman, Stronach 1970: 34, fig 14,5, pl IX(d).

[20] Henrickson 1994: 113. An influx of Greek imports also occurs along the Black Sea coast in Colchis, Georgia in the late fifth-first half of the fourth century BC; Lordkipanidse 1991: Abb 61.

[21] Hasanlu 1958: VII (1/2). See Hellström 1965: pl 12, 184.

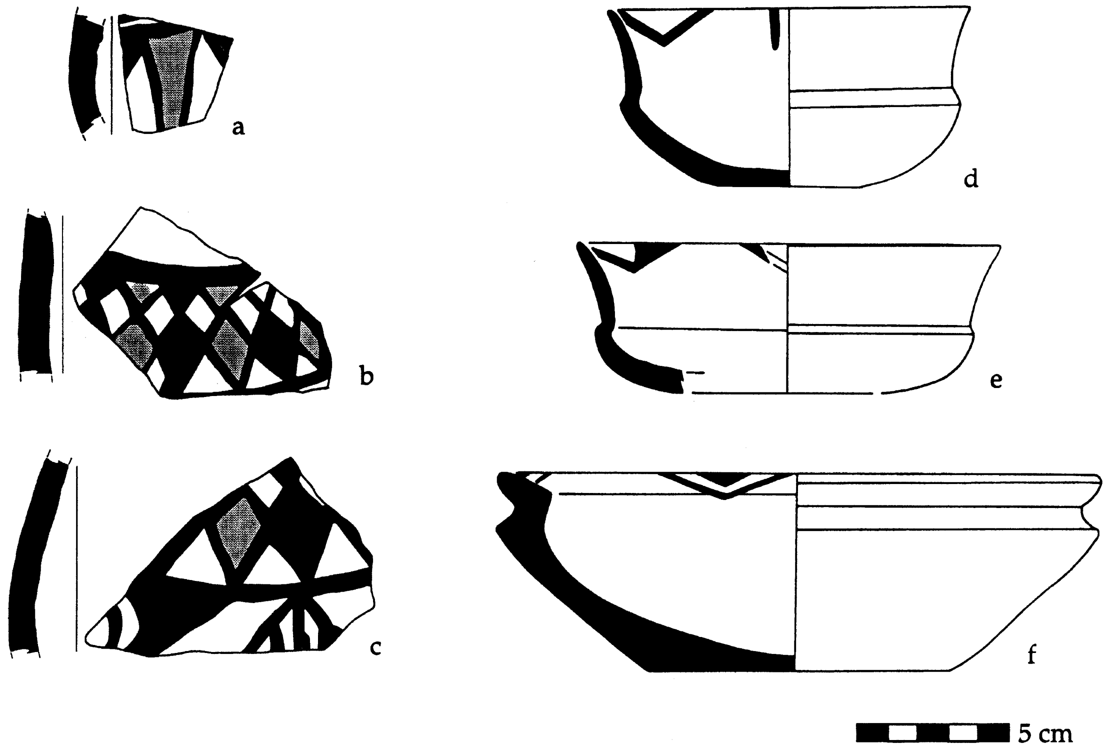

Fig 5. Hasanlu IIIA: bichrome jars (a-c); Western Triangle bowls (d-f)

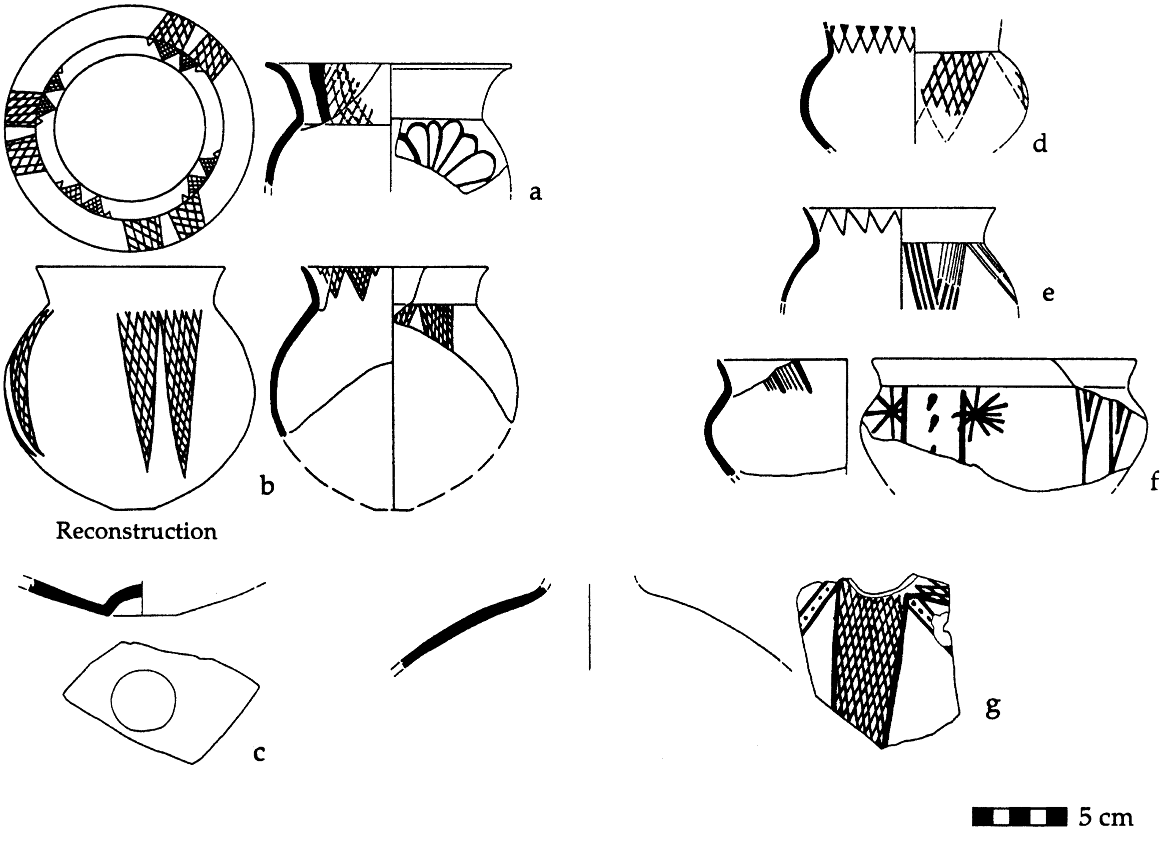

Fig 6. Hasanlu IIIA: imported 'Classic' Triangle Ware

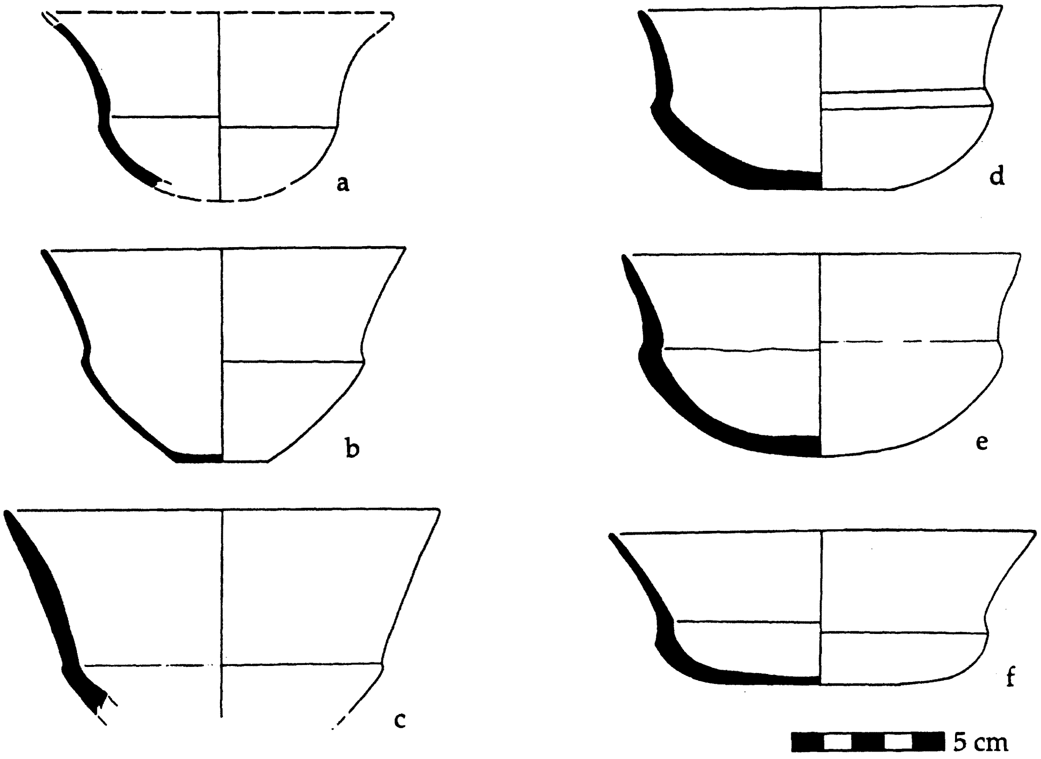

Fig 7. Hasanlu IIIA shapes: carinated bowls with flaring rims

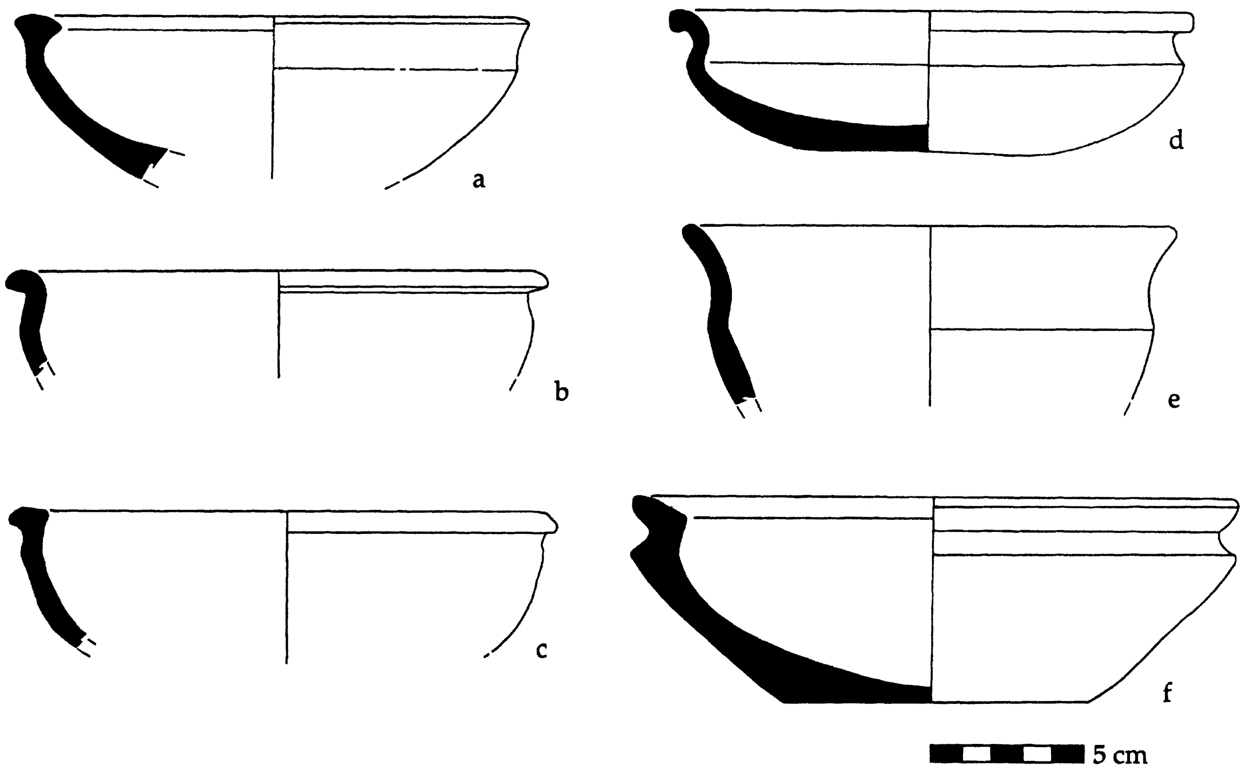

Fig 8. Hasanlu IIIA shapes: bowls with club (a) and everted (b-d, f) rims; sinuous-sided bowl (e)

Catalogue of illustrated pottery

Code: Core color, temper, surface finish and color, paint color. Rim diameter in cms, maximum bowl rim, or jar body, thickness in cms, season, locus and (stratum). University of Pennsylvania Museum number. All wheel-made.

Carinated, deep bowls, flaring-sided

Fig 1a. Buff, none visible, lightly burnished orange-buff, plum-red. D. 12, Th. 0.4, 1972, W 31 (1a).
Fig 1b. Buff, lime pops, smoothed buff, dark brown. D. 14.5, Th. 0.6, 1972, X 32 (5) mixed. UM 73-5-778.
Fig 1c. Buff, none visible, polished buff, brown. D. 15, Th. 0.5, 1958, VII (3). UM 59-4-207.
Fig 5d. Buff, fine grit, matte buff, red. D. 12, Th. 0.7, 1974, W 23 (3).
Fig 7a. Buff, fine grit, burnished light buff, brown. D. 11.5, Th. 0.4, 1970, Y 31 (1). Shape only illustrated.
Fig 7b. Orange, none visible, matte orange, orange-red. D. 12, Th. 0.2, 1974, X 20 (2) Pit B. Shape only illustrated.
Fig 7c. Buff, lime pops, smoothed buff, dark brown. D. 14.5, Th. 0.6, 1972, X 32 (5) mixed. UM 73-5-778. Shape only illustrated.
Fig 7d. Shape only. See fig 5d.
Fig 7e. Brown and red-brown paint. Shape only illustrated. D. 13.2, Th. 0.6, 1958, IX L (1/2). UM 59-4-208.

Carinated, shallow, flat-based (?) bowls, flaring-sided

Fig 1d. Buff, fine grit, matte pinkish-buff, dark red. D. 13, Th. 0.5, 1972, V 20 (2).
Fig 1e. Pinkish-buff, fine grit, smoothed cream-buff. D. 15, Th. 0.6, 1970, Y 30 (2).
Fig 1f. Buff, some mica, lightly burnished buff, brown. D. 16, Th. 0.7, 1970, W 30 (3).
Fig 1g. Buff, none visible, polished buff, black. D. 18, Th. 0.5, 1957, VII (JK) (3). UM 58-4-114.
Fig 5e. Buff, fine grit, smoothed light buff, red. D. 14, Th. 0.5, 1972, V 30N (1a).
Fig 7f. Shape only. See fig 2d.

Carinated, flat-based bowl with inward-slanting rim

Fig 5f. Buff, fine grit, matte pinkish-buff, dark red. D. 20, Th. 0.9, 1962, R 25 (3) Pit 6. UM 63-5-2034.

Uncarinated sinuous-sided bowls

Fig 2d. Buff, fine grit, orange-buff, plum-brown. D. 14, Th. 0.8, 1970, W 30 (2/3).
Fig 2e. Buff, fine grit, smoothed light buff, red. D. 14, Th. 0.7, 1958, IX J (1).
Fig 2f. Buff, fine grit, smoothed buff, plum-brown. D. 14, Th. 0.7, 1962, U 23 (2/3).
Fig 8e. Shape only. See fig 2f.

Uncarinated, club-rimmed bowls

Fig 2a. Buff, none visible, buff, brown. D. 17, Th. 0.7, 1962, R 23 (1).
Fig 2b. Reddish-buff, sand, smoothed yellow-buff, red. D. 18, Th. 0.7, unstratified.
Fig 2c. Buff, sand, smoothed yellow-buff, red. D. 20, Th. 0.6, 1970, Y 31 (2) Pit 10. UM 71-28-384.
Fig 8a. Shape only. See fig 3b.

Uncarinated bowls with everted rounded rims

Fig 3a. Orange, lime pops, lightly burnished reddish-buff, brown. D. 18, Th. 0.7, 1970, W 30 (2/3). UM 71-23-602.
Fig 3b. Buff, sand, smoothed buff, dark brown. D. 18, Th. 0.5, 1956, VII (+).
Fig 3c. Buff, sand, reddish-buff, reddish-brown. D. 19, Th. 0.4, 1956, VII (+).
Fig 3d. Buff, sand, smoothed yellowish, brown. D. 26, Th. 0.6, 1970, X 30 (2).
Fig 8b. Shape only. See fig 3a.
Fig 8c. Shape only. See fig 3b.

Carinated bowls with everted squared rims

Fig 3e. Buff, fine grit, cream-slipped, dark brown. D. 17.5, Th. 0.6, 1962, L (2).
Fig 3f. Buff, fine grit, buff, plum. D. 19, Th. 0.8, 1968, +. UM 69-9-52.
Fig 8d. Shape only. See fig 3e.

Brown-line Ware

Buff, fine grit, polished red-brown, red-brown.
Fig 4a. Th. 0.8, 1974, W 32 (1/2a). UM 75-29-774.
Fig 4b. Th. 1.0, 1974, W 32 (1/2). UM 75-29-775.
Fig 4c. Th. 0.8, 1974, W 32 (4) mixed. UM 75-29-776.
Fig 4d. Th. 0.7, 1974, W 31E (2).

Cream-slipped Bichrome Ware

Orangish-red, fine grit, burnished cream slip, plum and red-brown.
Fig 5a. Th. 0.9, 1960, CC 29 (2).
Fig 5b. Th. 1.0, 1970, Y 31 (2) Pit 4. UM 71-23-605.
Fig 5c. Th. 0.9, 1970, Y 30 (2/3). UM 71-23-603.

Classic Triangle Ware

Fig 6a. Greyish, none visible, polished yellow-buff, dark brown. D. 13, Th. 0.5, 1962, S 22 (3). UM 63-5-2017.
Fig 6b. Orange, none visible, polished orangish-buff, dark brown. D. 10, Th. 0.3, 1958, Z 25 (3). UM 59-4-41.
Fig 6c. Grey-buff, none visible, polished yellow-buff, no paint. D. base 3.3 Th. 0.7, 1962, S 22 (3). UM 63-5-2018.

Fig 6d. Orange-buff, none visible, polished orange, dark brown. D. 9, Th. 0.3, 1962, VIG (5) mixed.

Fig 6e. Orange-buff, none visible, polished orange, dark brown. D. 10, Th. 0.3, 1964, VIE (2).

Fig 6f. Brown-buff, none visible, polished reddish-brown, dark brown. D. 14, Th. 0.3, 1959, XXXA (2/3). UM 60-20-260.

Fig 6g. Orange-buff, none visible, polished orange-buff, dark brown. D. neck 3.2, Th. 0.6, 1962, R 22 (2).

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